

Remarks by Deputy Chief of U.S. Mission Albert A. Thibault  
At the Opening of the US-India Conference and Exhibition  
“Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) ”  
Centaur Hotel, New Delhi  
Monday, April 29, 9:30 a.m.

Secretary Roy Paul, Chairman Narula, Director Shaw, FAA representative Beres, ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to be here at this opening of the “Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) Conference and Exhibition” organized by the U.S. Trade and Development Agency, Federal Aviation Administration and the Airports Authority of India.

Let me begin by thanking the Airports Authority of India, the Ministry of Civil Aviation and the Indian Space Research Organization for the exceptional work in holding the Global Positioning System (GPS) technical workshop last week in Bangalore.

The workshop in Bangalore and the conference that begins here today are being held at a time when the US-India relationship is undergoing a dramatic transformation. President Bush has specifically signaled his determination to intensify US collaboration with India on a wide range of issues, a process that accelerated after September 11, 2001. India and the United States have increased their bilateral cooperation in diplomacy, defense, intelligence-sharing, and law enforcement in ways unimaginable a short time ago. We are also deepening our engagement in such fields as the environment, energy, space cooperation, and scientific and medical research. The broadening and intensification of our cooperative efforts are generating new commercial opportunities, as well, which US and Indian partners are pursuing in the private sector.

Reflecting that greater level of engagement, more than fifty American policymakers at the Assistant Secretary level and above have visited India in the last several months, while many members of the Prime Minister’s senior national security team have travelled to the United States during the same time frame. In support of India’s interest in a Global Navigation Satellite System, several senior officials from the Department of Transportation, and Federal Aviation Administration have visited India over the last two years. And just last

month, several senior officials from the Government of India, the Airports Authority of India, and the Indian Space Research Organisation visited the U.S. to foster co-operation in the GNSS sector.

The technical cooperation between the U.S. and India has been very productive and it is the cornerstone for providing a future seamless satellite-based-navigation operating environment within and between our respective airspaces. While conventional ground-based systems will continue to play an important role in our transition to a future satellite-based operating environment, we, collectively, need to implement a satellite navigation system to take aviation safety to the next higher level. This can and should be accomplished through continued cooperation, as well as joint multilateral support and assistance, as we work toward the broader goal of implementing a seamless regional satellite navigation capability in the Asia and Pacific Regions.

U.S. Industry and their technical experts have played a large role in the development of the relationship between the Government of India and the Federal Aviation Administration in the United States. U.S. businesses and technical specialists provided support for the U.S. industry facilities tours provided to Indian representatives who visited the US in March of this year. These US industry experts provided technical support at the GPS Technical Workshop in Bangalore last week, as well, and will continue their support throughout the conference here in Delhi. In fact, I noticed from the conference agenda that a full day is devoted to presentations by U.S. industry representatives and I am confident that this interaction will be helpful to both India and the US, as we learn from each other. We will be looking to the US and Indian business communities to help bridge sectoral gaps and establish linkages in those areas that hold the greatest promise for expanding the US-India commercial relationship, including aviation, space and related sectors.

I want to thank the Government of India for its continuing partnership with the US Department of Transportation and the Federal Aviation Administration in the development and implementation of our respective Satellite-Based Augmentation Systems (SBAS). These ongoing efforts will result in our achieving our shared goal, and that of the International Civil Aviation Organization, of global interoperability between international systems. I encourage planners and managers of all transportation modes to participate in the implementation and adoption of satellite-based navigation technologies.

I understand that the Indian Space Research Organization has already tendered for a Global Positioning System that is a satellite-based augmentation system, known as GAGAN. I am pleased that an internationally known and respected U.S. company, Raytheon, is participating in this open, global competition and has submitted its bid for this project. An agency of the United States Government--the U.S. Trade & Development Agency—has offered a \$500,000 training grant to facilitate execution of the GAGAN project, should the US firm be successful in the competition. In addition to the support being offered by other elements of the US government and US industry, I think this training grant demonstrates clearly the strong commitment of the U.S. Government in support of this project.

I understand that in its bid, Raytheon is offering to the Indian Space Research Organization its leading edge technology--Wide Area Augmentation System—which was developed for the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration. This System is scheduled for initial operational capability in December 2003. The FAA is committed to provide the Government of India with technical assistance, guidance, and consultations, as needed, to facilitate the successful implementation of India's Satellite Based Augmentation System (SBAS). The Raytheon/FAA technology should fit perfectly into India's goal of modernizing its air traffic control and navigation systems, establishing improved air traffic safety in India.

During the next two days, participants will hear from experts from both the U.S. and India on GNSS, its applications and benefits for the region. Presentations will be framed around the primary issues and options that decision-makers will face in adopting GNSS, as they implement new generation Communications/Navigation/Surveillance Air Traffic Management (CNS/ATM) aviation systems. This conference presents a unique opportunity for the experts in this field to share their knowledge and experiences, their best practices and successes. It is through this type of partnership—a partnership between our two governments and our US-Indian business communities—that I believe the best solutions for enhanced air traffic efficiency and safety will be found.

Thank you, and my best to each of you over the course of this two-day conference. Let's continue the partnership.